REMARKS

Applicant has amended independent Claims 1, 3 8 and 9 to better define the present invention. Support for the claim amendments can be found in the current Specification, on for example, page 9 (line 25) through page 10 (line 3).

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(a), (b) as being anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over WO 2003/059654 to Maruoka et al. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Applicant respectfully submits that the cited reference fails to disclose or suggest all of the claimed features of the present invention. More specifically, the Maruoka et al. reference fails to disclose or suggest a pneumatic tire with the specific ranges of the ratios of ground contact pressures defined in independent Claim 1, as well as the claimed pressure distribution in which "ground-contact pressure distribution in each of center-rib, second-rib, and shoulder-rib gradually decreases from the middle of the rib towards the edges."

As discussed in Amendment A (which arguments are incorporated herein by reference), the Maruoka et al. reference fails to disclose or suggest the claimed contact pressure ratios because the reference provides no values for the contact pressures at the locations defined in the claims. In addition, the Maruoka et al. reference also fails to disclose or suggest the currently claimed contact pressure distribution that has been added to Claim 1.

In response to Applicant's argument of Amendment A, the Examiner referred to paragraph 46 of the US version of Maruoka et al. for the proposition that pressure

measurements that are taken using a sheet with multiple sensors must include sensors measuring the contact pressure at the middle of the rib. In response, Applicant respectfully asserts that even assuming *arguendo* that such measurements at the center of the rib are taken, their values are not disclosed. Further, as can be seen in for example, Applicant's Figure 1, the contact pressure values vary greatly across the width of each of the ribs in a typical pneumatic tire. Thus, a measurement that is the summation of forces upon a single half rib, as done in Maruoka et al., does not provide any disclosure of the contact pressure at a specific point at a center or edge of the rib, nor does it provide any disclosure of the contact-pressure distribution from the middle of the rib towards the edges. Further, since the contact pressure values at the specific points defined in the ratios of Claim 1 are not disclosed in Maruoka et al., it would not have been obvious to have attempted to optimize these values. Thus, for at least these reasons, Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of this §103 rejection of independent Claim 1.

In addition, Applicant also request the withdrawal of this §103 rejection of Claim 1 because Applicant does not agree that it is proper to compare P2e/P2c of Maruoka et al. with (Beo/Bc)/(Bei/Bc) of the claims of the present application. Although the resulting values of the calculation are almost the same, Applicant respectfully submits that the comparison itself does not make any sense and is inappropriate because P2e/P2c of Maruoka et al. has a completely different nature from (Beo/Bc)/(Bei/Bc) of the present Application.

For example, P2c of Maruoka et al. is the total load applied on the area R2c, while Beo and Bc of the claims of the present application are ground-contact pressures of

positions as indicated by Beo and Be in Applicant's Figure 3. The Maruoka et al. reference fails to measure ground-contact pressure of positions, but merely discloses measuring total load applied on the areas. Applicant submits that values derived from the measurements of the ground-contact pressure of positions should not be compared with the values derived from the measurements of total load applied on the areas. Applicant further requests that if the Examiner maintains that it is appropriate to equate P2e/P2c of the Maruoka et al. reference with (Beo/Bc)/(Bei/Bc) of the claims of the present application, the Examiner should mathematically prove that it is appropriate to do so.

Claims 3-6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Maruoka et al. in view of Japanese Publication No. 6-344727 (JP '727). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Applicant respectfully submits that the cited references fail to disclose or suggest all of the features of the present invention. With regard to the §103 rejection of independent Claim 3, the Maruoka et al. reference fails to disclose or suggest a pneumatic tire with the specific ranges of the ratios of ground contact pressures and the pressure distribution defined in independent Claim 3, as discussed above in the remarks directed to the §102(b)/§103 rejection of Claim 1, which also includes the same ratios and pressure distribution features. JP '727 does not remedy this deficiency, nor was it relied upon as such. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of this §103 rejection of Claims 3-6.

Claim 9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Maruoka et al. in view of United States patent Application Publication No. 2001/0054464 to Tozawa et al., JP '727 and Japanese Publication No. 63-068406 (JP '406). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Applicant respectfully submits that the cited references fail to disclose or suggest all of the features of the present invention. With regard to the §103 rejection of independent Claim 9, the Maruoka et al. reference fails to disclose or suggest a pneumatic tire with the specific ranges of the ratios of ground contact pressures and the pressure distribution defined in independent Claim 9, as discussed above in the remarks directed to the §102(b)/§103 rejection of Claim 1, which also includes the same ratios and pressure distribution features. The Tozawa et al. reference, JP '727 and JP '406 do not remedy this deficiency, nor were they relied upon as such. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of this §103 rejection of Claim 9.

Finally Applicant has also added new independent Claim 10, which is similar to Claim 9, except that the angles for the outer grooves are limited to positive values. Such a claim reads over the Tozawa et al. reference, when combined with Maruoka et al., JP 6-344727 and JP 63-068406, because the Tozawa et al. reference only discloses outer grooves with negative angles. New Claim 10 also reads over the cited references for the reasons discussed above in the remarks directed to the §102(b)/§103 rejection of Claim 1, which also includes the same ratios and pressure distribution features defined in new independent Claim 10.

For all of the above reasons, Applicant requests reconsideration and allowance of the claimed invention. Should the Examiner be of the opinion that a telephone conference would aid in the prosecution of the application, or that outstanding issues exist, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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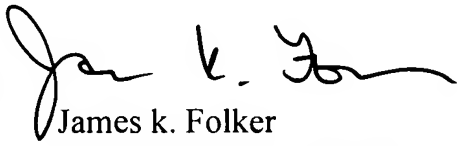
By 
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